

Policy 7

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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Environment and Development		
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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy document acknowledges the links between the environment and development and stresses that preventing environmental degradation is essential to alleviating poverty and ensuring sustainable development. ADRA Vanuatu, as a faith-based agency upholds the belief that mankind is a steward of the earth and its resources. Nowhere is this belief more important than in our humanitarian assistance work – both relief and development. ADRA Vanuatu believes that development, quality of life and the environment are closely interrelated. The environment impacts human beings and human beings impact the environment. Therefore it is critical that projects/programs are assessed from an environmental perspective.

2. DEFINITIONS AND INFORMATION

Environment is defined as:

- a. ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities
- b. natural and physical resources
- c. the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas, and
- d. the social, economic and cultural aspects of the mentioned in a, b or c.

The links between the environment and poverty are not simple. However, an understanding of some of the ways that environmental issues affect the poor can help in determining how aid can be used more effectively to address poverty. The publication *Linking Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management Policy Challenges and Opportunities* (published by the World Bank in 2002) addresses this issue. It identifies five key ways to ensure environmental management reduces poverty:

- ensure sound and equitable management of biodiversity and ecosystems
- ensure access to safe water and sanitation
- improve air quality and limit exposure to toxic chemicals
- mitigate the effects of natural disasters and reduce resource-based conflict, and
- mitigate the effects of climate change.

3. POLICY STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES

This policy determines that all projects/programs deemed to have potential environmental impacts will undertake an environmental assessment. This assessment may happen (1)

during activity identification and initial assessment, (2) during activity preparation and (3) during activity implementation.

A. Environmental Assessment

Proper environmental assessment helps develop more effective and adaptable projects/programs which greatly increase the likelihood of success and sustainability in the long term.

Through early environmental assessments, potentially adverse effects can be identified and the most environmentally friendly alternatives discovered. This process also empowers project managers to identify activities that enhance positive environmental outcomes.

ADRA Vanuatu recommends that projects in the following sectors particularly, examine the environmental impact of their activities and develop an environmental impact assessment for their project.

- WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene) Infrastructure
- Building Construction
- Forestry: Nurseries, Reforestation and Harvesting
- Irrigation
- Waste Management
- Rural roads
- Aquaculture/Fish Farming
- Animal Husbandry
- Food Security

When projects/programs are deemed to have environmental impacts, activity managers will be required at the concept note stage, to undertake the initial environment assessment by completing the environmental marker questions below.

B. Environmental marker questions

- Q1. Is the activity in an environmentally sensitive location or sector?
- Q2. Is there potential for the activity to have an impact on the environment?
- Q3. Is the explicit, or implicit, aim of the activity to have a positive environmental impact?
- Q4. Is the activity relevant to multilateral environment agreements?
- Q5. Could the activity have significant negative environmental impacts?

If a 'Yes' is answered to any of the above environmental marker question, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be required during the development of a full project proposal.

C. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Environmental impact assessment identifies, predicts and evaluates foreseeable environmental impacts. An EIA is undertaken in country by the feasibility and design team that includes members with appropriate environmental skills and members representing all relevant stakeholders. The EIA should be included into the project proposal as a separate annex.

The EIA outlines through a matrix completed by project staff, possible management solutions for identified environmental impacts. These solutions form the basis of an

Environmental Management Plan, which can be expanded in detail by project staff and must be completed to complement project design documents.

D. Environmental Management Plan (EMP)

The main steps involved in the development of an EMP are:

- Identify the issues considered in the EIA.
- Determine what actions can be taken to mitigate these environmental impacts.
- Identify who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the EMP.

E. The Influence of Climate Change

During the completion of Environmental Impact Assessments, project/program managers are encouraged to use complementary tools to assess the risks posed by climate change to the environmental context in which an intervention takes place. These risks are also considered within the EIA/EMP and are monitored throughout the project cycle.

F. Harmonisation with Environmental Guidelines

ADRA Vanuatu's relief and development projects, including the process through which we assess and manage their environment impact are guided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Environmental Protection Policy (November 2014),

ADRA Vanuatu's implementation practices are also compatible with the six principles of DFAT's Environmental Project Policy (2014) which encourage projects/programs to:

- Principle 1: Do no harm
- Principle 2: Assess and manage environmental risks and impacts
- Principle 3: Disclose information transparently
- Principle 4: Consult stakeholders
- Principle 5: Work with partners
- Principle 6: Promote improved environmental outcomes

Guidance on DFAT's Environmental Protection Policy is available at:

<http://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/safeguards-risk-management/environmental-protection/Pages/environmental-protection.aspx>